

Message Text

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43

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 IO-15 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-15

USIA-15 ACDA-19 EB-11 OMB-01 AGR-20 COME-00 TRSE-00

CIEP-02 DRC-01 /166 W

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FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1222

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

USMISSION BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMCONSUL MILAN

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USMISSION OECD PARIS

USMISSION GENEVA

UNCLAS ROME 10871

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAGR, IT

SUBJ: ITALIAN MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, FERRARI-AGGRADI AT
EUROCARNE, VERONA

SECSTATE PASS AGRICULTURE

FROM AGATTACHE

REF: ROME 10208

SUMMARY: WELL AWARE OF WEAKENING OF FARMERS SUPPORT WITHIN
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CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY, ITALIAN MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE

AGAIN CHOSE AN AGRICULTURAL FAIR TO EXPRESS HIS PERSONAL CONCERN ABOUT THE PRESENT PLIGHT OF ITALIAN FARMERS. END SUMMARY.

1. FERRARI-AGGRADI COURAGEOUSLY CHOSE TO CONFRONT FARMERS AT EUROCARNE FAIR ON OCTOBER 5 NOT WITHSTANDING HIS FRUSTRATING EXPERIENCE AT CREMONA FAIR TWO WEEKS EARLIER (REFTEL). THIS TIME FARMERS PROVED LESS REBELLIOUS AND LET MINISTER SPEAK WITH ONLY LIMITED INTERRUPTIONS AND AT LEAST SOME MEANINGFUL DIALOGUE, ALBEIT VERY CRITICAL TOWARDS GOI AND EC.

2. MINISTER REPEATED CONCERN OF GOI REGARDING CONSEQUENCES OF CERTAIN EC REGULATIONS WHICH INSUFFICIENTLY COVER PRESENT NEEDS OF ITALIAN AGRICULTURE, MAINLY IN ANIMAL SECTOR.

3. MINISTER STATED THAT WHILE VISITING WASHINGTON, D.C. EARLY AUGUST, HE HAD MANAGED TO CONVINCE USG LIFT RESTRICTIONS ON SOYBEAN/-MEAL EXPORT TO ITALY, FOR WHICH HE CLAIMED FULL CREDIT FROM ITALY FARMERS.(SUCH STATEMENT MAY SERVE AS INDICATION HOW MUCH MINISTER IS IN NEED OF RENEWED SUPPORT FROM FARMERS.) HE DESCRIBED THE QUOTE GRAIN CRISIS UNQUOTE AS A TEMPORARY PHENOMENA BUT THE SUBSIDIZED EXPORTS OF MILK AND MEAT TO ITALY FROM EC MEMBER COUNTRIES, MAINLY PRG, AS MUCH MORE DANGEROUS. MINISTER STRESSED QUOTE THAT REGULATIONS WITHIN EC DO OBVIOUSLY NOT FUNCTION WELL AND AGGRAVATE DIFFICULT POSITION ITALIAN AGRICULTURE IS CONFRONTED WITH UNQUOTE.

4. AS OFTEN REPORTED BEFORE, IMPACT OF AGRICULTURE ON ITALIAN POLITICS GREATER THAN THE IMPORTANCE OF AGRICULTURE IN ITALY'S OVERALL ECONOMY.

THE MAJORITY PARTY, CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS DEPEND ON 42 PERCENT OF FARM VOTES AND FOR YEARS THESE VOTES COULD BE ASCERTAINED BY REGULATIONS AIMED AT GIVING FARMERS A MINIMUM INCOME AND PROMISES FOR A BETTER FUTURE. ONE COULD SAY THAT THERE EXISTED MORE ATTENTION TO QUOTE VOTECULTURE UNQUOTE THAN TO AGRICULTURE RESULTING IN ITALIAN AGRICULTURE DRAGGING BEHIND IN NEEDED MODERNIZATION AND FOR LARGER FARM UNITS TO BETTER BENEFIT OF MODERN TECHNOLOGY. INSTEAD MANY SMALL FARMERS WHO COULD PROVIDE VOTES WERE KEPT ALIVE. RECENTLY THE INFLUENCES AND CHANGES IN MONETARY, INFLATIONARY AND IN THE CONSUMER SOCIETY SECTORS AS WELL AS WITHIN EC SEEM TO UNCLASSIFIED

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HAVE PROVED STRONGER THAN THE CAPACITY FOR REPAIR WORK BY THE OLD POLITICAL FORCES. A BREAK-THROUGH SEEMS TO TAKE PLACE. THE RECENT REBELLION BY ITALIAN FARMERS ORGANIZATION, THE COLTIVATORI DIRETTI, WHO HITHERTO PROVIDED THOSE 42 PERCENT VOTES FROM THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY. MEANWHILE THE ATTENTION FOR AGRICULTURE FROM BOTH THE POLITICAL LEFT AND RIGHT INCREASES ALSO BUT AS YET IS NOT CAUSING REAL TROUBLE TO THE PRESENT RUMOR GOVERNMENT.

5. ITALY NOW SEEMS TO ENTER NEW ERA. THE FARMERS SEEM TIRED OF VOTECULTURE AND WANT FULL ATTENTION FOR THE NEEDS OF AGRICULTURE WHICH FOR A GOOD PART ARE INFLUENCED BY EC POLICIES. CONSEQUENTLY WE MAY EXPECT MORE AGGRESSIVE ITALIAN STANCE ON AGRICULTURAL MATTERS IN BRUSSELS, ALSO SINCE THE POLITICAL CENTER JUST CANNOT AFFORD TO LOSE TOO MANY FARM VOTES WHEREAS OLD NATIONAL REMEDIES SEEM NOT EFFECTIVE ANYMORE.

6. SECRETARY GENERAL FANFANI OF CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY HAS CONVENED TOP POLICY MEETING ON AGRICULTURE FOR OCTOBER 12/13. BEAUDRY

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